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Draft report of the Committee on Information

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* To be issued in A/AC.198/1998/L.1/Add.1

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I. Introduction

1. At its thirty-fourth session, the General Assembly decided to maintain the Committee to Review United Nations Public Information Policies and Activities, established under Assembly resolution 33/115 C of 18 December 1978, which would be known as the Committee on Information, and to increase its membership from 41 to 66. In paragraph 2 of section II of its resolution 34/182 of 18 December 1979, the Assembly requested the Committee on Information:

> "(a) To continue to examine United Nations public information policies and activities, in the light of the evolution of international relations, particularly during the past two decades, and of the imperatives of the establishment of the new international economic order and of a new world information and communication order;
>
> "(b) To evaluate and follow up the efforts made and the progress achieved by the United Nations system in the field of information and communications;
>
> "(c) To promote the establishment of a new, more just and more effective world information and communication order intended to strengthen peace and international understanding and based on the free circulation and wider and better balanced dissemination of information and to make recommendations thereon to the General Assembly;"

and requested the Committee on Information and the Secretary-General to report to the Assembly at its thirty-fifth session.

2. At its thirty-fifth session, the General Assembly, in resolution 35/201 of 16 December 1980, expressed its satisfaction with the work of the Committee on Information, approved the report of the Committee and the recommendations of its Ad Hoc Working Group,[1] reaffirmed the mandate given to the Committee in Assembly resolution 34/182, and decided to increase the membership of the Committee from 66 to 67 members. The Committee on Information agreed, at its organizational session in 1980, that the principle of geographical rotation would be applied to all the officers of the Committee and that they should be elected for two-year terms of office.

3. At its thirty-sixth to fifty-first sessions, the General Assembly again expressed its satisfaction with the work of the Committee on Information, approved the reports of the Committee[2] and its recommendations, and reaffirmed the mandate given to the Committee in resolution 34/182 (General Assembly resolutions 36/149 B, 37/94 B, 38/82 B, 39/98 A, 40/164 A, 41/68 A, 42/162, 43/60, 44/50, 45/76, 46/73 B, 47/73 B, 48/44 B, 49/38 B, 50/31 B, and 51/138 B. At its fifty-second session, the Assembly took note of the report of the Committee[3] and adopted its consensus recommendations (52/70 A and B of 10 December 1997). The Assembly further requested the Committee to report to it at its fifty-third session.

4. At its thirty-ninth session, the General Assembly appointed two new members of the Committee, namely China and Mexico; at its forty-first session the Assembly appointed Malta as a new member of the Committee; at its forty-third session, Hungary, Ireland and Zimbabwe were appointed; and at its forty-fourth session, the Assembly appointed Nepal a new member.

5. At its forty-fifth session, the General Assembly decided, on the recommendation of the Committee on Information, to increase the membership of the Committee from 74 to 78 members, and appointed Czechoslovakia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Jamaica and Uruguay members of the Committee. The General Assembly also decided on the appointment of the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic as a member of the Committee on Information, with immediate effect, to fill the vacancy left by the German Democratic Republic.

6. At its forty-sixth session, the General Assembly decided, on the recommendation of the Committee, to increase the membership of the Committee from 78 to 79 members, and appointed Burkina Faso a member of the Committee.

7. At its forty-seventh session, the General Assembly decided, on the recommendation of the Committee, to increase the membership of the Committee from 79 to 81 members, and appointed the Republic of Korea and Senegal members of the Committee.

8. At its forty-eighth session, the General Assembly decided, on the recommendation of the Committee, to increase the membership of the Committee from 81 to 83 members, and appointed Gabon and Israel members of the Committee.

9. At its forty-ninth session, the General Assembly decided to increase the membership of the Committee on Information from 83 to 88 members, and decided to appoint Belize, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Kazakhstan and South Africa members of the Committee.

10. At its fiftieth session the General Assembly decided, on the recommendation of the Committee, to increase the membership from 88 to 89 members, and appointed the

Democratic People's Republic of Korea a member of the Committee.

11. At its fifty-second session, the General Assembly decided, on the recommendation of the Committee, to increase the membership of the Committee from 89 to 90 members, and to appoint Georgia a member of the Committee.

12. The Committee is composed of the following Member States:

Algeria
Argentina
Bangladesh
Belarus
Belgium
Belize
Benin
Brazil
Bulgaria
Burkina Faso
Burundi
Chile
China
Colombia
Congo
Costa Rica
Côte d'Ivoire
Croatia
Cuba
Cyprus
Czech Republic
Democratic People's Republic of Korea
Democratic Republic of the Congo
Denmark
Ecuador
Egypt
El Salvador
Ethiopia
Finland
France
Gabon
Georgia
Germany
Ghana
Greece
Guatemala
Guinea
Guyana
Hungary
India
Indonesia
Iran (Islamic Republic of)
Ireland
Israel
Italy
Jamaica
Japan
Jordan
Kazakhstan
Kenya
Lebanon
Malta
Mexico
Mongolia
Morocco
Nepal
Netherlands
Niger
Nigeria
Pakistan
Peru
Philippines
Poland
Portugal
Republic of Korea
Romania
Russian Federation
Senegal
Singapore
Slovakia
Somalia
South Africa
Spain
Sri Lanka
Sudan
Syrian Arab Republic
Togo
Trinidad and Tobago
Tunisia
Turkey
Ukraine
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
United Republic of Tanzania
United States of America
Uruguay
Venezuela
Viet Nam
Yemen
Yugoslavia
Zimbabwe

II. Organizational questions

A. Opening of the session

13. The organizational meeting of the twentieth session of the Committee on Information was held at United Nations Headquarters on 4 May 1998. The session was opened by the Chairman of the Committee, Mr. José Alberto de Sousa (Portugal).

B. Election of officers

14. Upon the nomination of the representative of Egypt, the Committee elected by acclamation Mr. Abdullahi Abubakar (Nigeria) to serve as a Vice-Chairman to complete an unexpired term of office in the Bureau. The officers of the Committee on Information for the period 1997-1998 are, thus as follows:

Chairman:
Mr. José Alberto de Sousa (Portugal)

Vice-Chairmen:
Mr. Holger Martinsen (Argentina)
Mr. Abdullahi Abubakar (Nigeria)
Mr. Salman Abbasy (Pakistan)

Rapporteur:
Mr. Alyaksei Skrypko (Belarus)

C. Adoption of the agenda and programme of work

15. At its organizational meeting, the Committee adopted, without objection, the following agenda and programme of work (A/AC.198/1998/1):

1. Opening of the session.
2. Adoption of the agenda and programme of work.
3. Election of officers.
4. Statement by the Chairman.
5. Statement by the Under-Secretary-General.
6. General debate and consideration of substantive questions:
   (a) Promotion of the establishment of a new, more just and more effective world information and communication order

intended to strengthen peace and international understanding and based on the free circulation and wider and better balanced dissemination of information;

(b) Continuation of the examination of United Nations public information policies and activities, in the light of the evolution of international relations and of the need to establish the new international economic order and the new world information and communication order;

(c) Evaluation and follow-up of the efforts made and the progress achieved by the United Nations system in the field of information and communications.

7. Preparation and adoption of the report of the Committee to the General Assembly at its fifty-third session.

16. The Committee held the substantive meetings of its twentieth session at United Nations Headquarters from 4 to 15 May 1998.

17. For consideration of item 6, the Committee had before it the reports of the Secretary-General on: (a) implementation of the measures regarding information and communications (A/AC.198/1998/2); and (b) activities of the Joint United Nations Information Committee (A/AC.198/1998/3).

D. Observers

18. The following Member States took part in the session as observers: Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Canada, Dominican Republic, Haiti, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Luxembourg, Malawi, Moldova, Namibia, Oman, Panama, Qatar, Solomon Islands, Suriname, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Tajikistan and the Holy See.

19. Representatives of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the International Monetary Fund, the International Labour Organization, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, the World Health Organization and the Organization of African Unity also attended.

E. Other matters

20. The Chairman informed the Committee that the Republic of Moldova had requested membership in the Committee.

Notes

[1] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 21* (A/35/21), annex, sect. V.

[2] Ibid., *Thirty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 21* (A/36/21); ibid., *Thirty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 21* (A/37/21 and Corr.1); ibid., *Thirty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 21* (A/38/21 and Corr.1 and 2); ibid., *Thirty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 21* (A/39/21); ibid., *Fortieth Session, Supplement No. 21* (A/40/21); ibid., *Forty-first Session, Supplement No. 21* (A/41/21); ibid., *Forty-second Session, Supplement No. 21* (A/42/21); ibid., *Forty-third Session, Supplement No. 21* (A/43/21); ibid., *Forty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 21* (A/44/21); ibid., *Forty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 21* (A/45/21); ibid., *Forty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 21* (A/46/21); ibid., *Forty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 21* (A/47/21); ibid., *Forty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 21* (A/48/21); ibid., *Forty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 21* (A/49/21); ibid., *Fiftieth Session, Supplement No. 21* (A/50/21); and ibid., *Fifty-first Session, Supplement No. 21* (A/51/21).

[3] Ibid., *fifty-second Session, Supplement No. 21* (A/52/21).